

Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition to Host Community Forum

The Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition announces that they will host a community forum on opioid abuse prevention and treatment next month, featuring a keynote address from Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey. Panelists will discuss the current opioid crisis in an attempt to identify solutions within the Arlington community. This discussion comes in the midst of a growing heroin and opioid abuse epidemic, which has touched communities nationwide.

WHEN:

Tuesday, October 13. From 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Arlington Town Hall, 730 Massachusetts Ave.

WHO:

Keynote Speaker Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey

The following panelists will present on the topic of identifying solutions to the opioid crisis in Arlington:

- Moderator Frederick Ryan, Arlington Police Chief
- Marian Ryan, Middlesex District Attorney
- Mike Duggan, Founder of Wicked Sober
- Rebecca Wolfe, Arlington Police Department Clinical Responder
- Dr. Alex Walley, Boston Public Health Commission's Opioid Treatment Program

WHAT:

The theme for this forum is "The Opioid Crisis: Identifying Community Solutions in Arlington," featuring a keynote presentation by Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, as well as a panel discussion followed by a question and answer session. Forum participants will learn how prescription drug abuse and opioid addiction affects all members of our community, the facts about the disease of addiction, and the options for treatment and recovery.

"No community has gone untouched by this opioid crisis, and that includes our own," Chief Ryan said. "I strongly encourage members of the Arlington community to attend this event. It is imperative that we understand that addiction is a disease and requires treatment like any other disease. As a community, we must begin to identify a solution in order to prevent future addicts from this terrible disease and to help those currently suffering to overcome

it."

Overdoses killed more people nationwide than car accidents in 2014. Chief Ryan is projecting that the number of fatal and non-fatal overdoses in Arlington will double this year from 2014.

"Opioid abuse disorder affects every member of our community – the disease of addiction does not discriminate," said Ivy Laplante, Director of the Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition. "It is up to us, as a community, to come together to identify solutions to aid in long-term recovery."

The Coalition is a division of the Department of Health and Human Services made up of a variety of community members including: parents, students, school personnel, faith-based organizations, government officials, substance abuse preventionists and members of law enforcement, and is uniquely placed within the community to respond to this crisis. Through a comprehensive prevention strategy, the Coalition works first hand to reduce availability of these substances, change community norms and foster a community where youth choose to live substance free.

"In order to combat this crisis, we need to come together as a community to talk about it," said James Feeney, Acting Director of Health and Human Services. "By furthering the conversation around opioid addiction, we can hope to reduce the stigma associated with it and create a climate where those families in Town facing a crisis are comfortable seeking help."

The forum is open to the media, and the public is encouraged to attend. For more information, please visit www.arlingtonma.gov/ayhsc or email Ivy Laplante at ilaplante@town.arlington.ma.us.